

**WOBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REMOTE MEETING
March 2, 2021**

A Regular Meeting of the Woburn School Committee was held on March 2, 2021, at the Joyce Middle School Conference Room, 55 Locust Street, Woburn, MA beginning at 7:30 pm.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-present, Ms. Cormier-present, Mr. Kisiel-present, Mr. Lipsett-present, Mr. Mulrenan-present, Dr. Wells-present, Chairperson Crowley-present

Chairperson Crowley announced that this meeting is a public meeting and is being broadcast at the Woburn Public Media station and the participants at this meeting will be recorded. In addition, we have two school committee members that are participating remotely, Mr. Andrew Lipsett and Mrs. Patricia Chisholm. Should we need to call a vote, those members will be voting by roll call since they are remote.

APPROVAL OF RECORDS

Ms. Cormier made a motion to approve the SC minutes of 2.9.21.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES (remote presentation)

Ms. Sarah Delano presented remotely.

March 2, 2021

- Cohort D (EL 1 and 2 and all TASC students) started back to school 4-days a week on 3/1. This brings approximately 100-students back to school 4-days a week.
- Fall II (or the Wedge) athletic season started after Feb. break. This brings football, volleyball, indoor track and cheerleading into full swing.
- Access testing for EL students is taking place for all EL students. Planning is taking place to solidify a schedule for AP students and graded 10 and 11 that have to take MCAS in the spring.
- Course Recommendations and Selection are in progress for grades 8-11. The Program of Studies for 2021-22 is published and distributed to all students within the last week. WMHS admin and dept. Leadership presented to the incoming ninth graders and parents, Mr. Martin and Ms. Sands will meet with grade 8 students this week, and Ms. Anderson with grade 8 EL students in person this week as well. Current grade 9-11 will complete course selection the week of March 15.
- Senior events are being tentatively planned and Ms. Callanan met w/ seniors today about upcoming events to include ordering of cap and gowns, senior internships, and more.
- EmBRACE Club worked to raise awareness during Black History Month in February through a series of events and dissemination of information.
- A number of students took the ASVAB, or military entrance exam for enlisted soldiers, at WMHS on 2/24.
- The Woburn High Theater Company put on their very first production this past Friday and Saturday. Lauren Szwed directed the student run play and did a wonderful job with the production. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas assisted with the student run play and are proud to begin the journey of the Woburn High Theater Company. The production was called Help Desk, was an online production and full of entertainment.

- The 2-year NEASC Report was submitted to NEASC on 3/1. This is a planned step toward the next accreditation cycle.
- WMHS will run a Woburn High student only SAT on March 24 during the school day, similar to how the PSAT was run in Oct. This is the first opportunity the College Board has afforded WMHS to run a Woburn only exam, which is the safest plan during the pandemic.
- The French National Honor Society will be presenting French films via Google Meets for all who would like to join in order to celebrate « le mois de la francophonie, » or the French language and culture month.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Please sign up ahead of time by emailing ellencrowley@woburnps.com for the purposes of crowd management and/or contact tracing. Chairperson Crowley did not receive any emails.

COUNCILOR Michael Concannon — Liaison between the City of Woburn and the School Committee

Councilor Concannon was attending a City Council meeting this evening.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS OF SUPERINTENDENT & STAFF (some presentations were heard remotely)

Silver Linings — Woburn Elementary Schools

Dr. Crowley introduced Kristen Maloney, principal of the Hurl Wyman and Rob Nickerson, principal of the Malcolm White.

Schools Are The Heart Of Our Community

Ms. Maloney began by saying the elementary principals are meeting weekly to elaborate and plan ahead for consistency to make it easier for our teachers, ourselves, and our families, so they know what is going on at the elementary level. When we came across February, we knew we wanted to make February special, and we knew we weren't going to be able to have students pass out valentines in their class and this is something the kids really look forward to. We wanted to do something across the whole district that would lift some spirits. We had supplies available for pickup at each of the schools. We told families and reminded them through a SMORES newsletter that they could use any supplies that they had at home, and if they needed anything we had them available at school for pickup and that way students who were in virtual academy could also be involved. When the hearts came in, we displayed them on the main doors of each school. All seven of our elementary schools had hearts displaying messages from students of why they love their schools. Some messages were about loving their friends, loving their playground, specific subjects, and a lot of messages about their teachers.

Character Trait for February — Citizenship

At the elementary level it can be tricky to show students what citizenship means. We had a first-grader at the Hurl Wyman in Mrs. Hooper's class who, when they had their discussion about citizenship and got their PowerPoint that the adjustment counselor and Mrs. Kent makes, the student decided that to be a good citizen is to help our neighbors. The way that he wanted to help our neighbors was to make sure that everyone had enough food to eat. When Mrs. Hooper heard this, she sent Ms. Maloney an email immediately and then came down to the office to ask if we could do something to promote this young first-grader's idea of helping others in our city. We came up with an idea of doing a food drive that would benefit the Council for Social Concern. We collected food up until the Friday before February vacation. Mrs. Kent and Mr. Nickerson dropped off all the boxes at the Council for Social Concern. This was done without alerting them ahead of time. Mr. Nickerson's backseat and trunk were filled with nonperishables and items to stock their shelves. They were very appreciative. This filled everyone's heart by seeing the displays at the schools and being able to do the food drive for our community.

Collective response about the silver lining from elementary principals is the caring and collaboration. They are seeing teachers taking care of each other, teachers going above and beyond for their students, we are seeing the same from parents who are essentially teachers on their remote days, and collaboration from the elementary principals. The collaboration among the principals is something they want to continue, to have cohesive practices, and to be consistent in their messages that go out to families.

Mr. Kisiel said the food drive idea is fantastic as kids are home a lot more now and there is a lot of unemployment.

Mr. Mulrenan commented that the silver lining part of this is that this idea all started from a first-grader in Ms.

Hooper's class and Mrs. Hooper coming to Ms. Maloney to let her know.

Chairperson Crowley thanked Ms. Maloney and Mr. Nickerson for coming tonight, this is something the kids will always remember. Dr. Crowley applauded all the students across the district for their efforts.

Literacy and Dyslexia Guide: Intensive Instruction & Equitable Access for All Learners

Dr. Crowley introduced Ms. Maureen Ryan, Director of Special Education and Ms. Courtney Young, Virtual Academy Administrator and Elementary Curriculum Coordinator.

Ms. Young began by saying they are here tonight to present an overview of the Literacy and Dyslexia Guide.

A more detailed plan will follow as they are in the process of bringing in more stakeholders who will be contributing to the work that they have set up. Tonight they will be walking through the process they are taking and present some key information, and the plans they have to move forward.

When Ms. Young and Ms. Ryan began the process of creating this guide with what they knew needed to be put into place, they knew they wanted to focus on equity and access to make sure students were receiving everything they needed in order to be successful in Woburn Public Schools, specifically in the area of literacy.

Vision: Ms. Young and Ms. Ryan brought together a group. Ms. Gillis, ELA Curriculum Coordinator, worked with her 6-12 grade staff and Ms. Young and Ms. Ryan worked with the elementary staff. They all worked together to generate what they really mean by literacy K-12 and what does a cohesive program look like. The vision was created by all departments and has been shared with families through the SMORES newsletter as well as all staff for early access.

Vision: Our literacy program offers a vertical scope and sequence with a multi-faceted, evidence-based, developmentally appropriate approach.

Ms. Young highlighted a few of the things or missions that are driving their decisions they have made around literacy.

- Encompasses different genres and culturally responsive texts and levels

- Allow our students to engage in multi-modal learning experiences that motivate them

- Monitors, tiers, and scaffolds instruction, with clear entry/exit criteria that prioritizes equity and access

- Choice within materials, while above all, encourages a love of learning and reading

Ms. Ryan went on to state that in Massachusetts, DESE released new guidelines for dyslexia. The thinking is that school districts need to move from a reactive deficit approach to more of a proactive preventative approach.

Literacy for Every Learner

Evidence-Based and Data Driven Process

- It is to identify students early on through screening and assessments

- It is to have high quality tiered instruction

- It is to have progress monitoring so that we have data where we can collaborate and analyze to make sure our students are where they need to be

When we talk about early identification of dyslexia, Massachusetts dyslexia falls in the disability category of specific learning disability. Ms. Ryan and her team are trying very hard to establish processes that are consistent across all schools. It would not matter what elementary school you attend, we will have consistent practices of being identified early. Part of it is we have adopted and invested in the ESI-3, this is the early screening inventory. This is a tool that was chosen carefully and will be used with all preschool students and all kindergarten students. It is a tool that will give us the data that we are looking for, and it will also work well in a digital platform, so that given the circumstances, we can effectively and efficiently screen students. We have also created a family history form to put with our enrollment packet; this family history is targeted to ask questions relating to reading challenges in families. The reason for this is that research has shown that dyslexia is hereditary. If a child has a first degree relative that is identified and has dyslexia they have a 50% chance of having a difficulty or a reading challenge. That data is pretty powerful. One of the things that comes with the dyslexia guidance is to look at different data points when you are identifying and screening students and family history is a critical component of that. We also have invested significantly in our investment tools. We have the most current assessments, and we have our choice of assessments. When we are trying to target a significant need, we can use what we believe is the very best tool to get the information that we want. Dyslexia, because it falls under the realm of specific learning disability in Massachusetts, is something school based that we have not really embraced the terminology. Part of the goal is to provide education, training, and to shift the culture a bit so that we can with confidence tease out and identify a student with dyslexia at an early age.

As Ms. Ryan and Ms. Young work together on this project one of the goals that they share is aligning the instruction and having cohesive tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3 models. These are our students, and it is really important that it is all aligned, and it works together hand in hand; if we have a student who is in tier 1 and goes to tier 2 or a student in tier 1 goes to tier 3, the systems in place work well for the students.

Ms. Young went on to say the work that they have done is really examining the programming and what is taking place in each of the tiers. Something that really matters to them is that they are not looking at the tiers in isolation; they are looking at all the tiers together. This has also supported the ability to look at our professional development. The most powerful part of professional development is that we have special education teachers and general education teachers participating in the same professional development. In order to make the learning experience for all learners what they needed; equity, and access, is making everything so that it is transferring from one place to another. The work that they are doing in tier 2, when they go back into their classroom, which it matches and extends, so they can make that transfer. We have been looking at not only as a district how these things are aligned but also how we are making it so that staff can see these connections.

Ms. Young said they have worked to house all of their data in the data analytics platform. This ensures that our students are taking assessments and our staff is getting the results of those assessments quickly, so they can be responsive. Ms. Ryan said this has been quite a year for assistive technology, and we have come so far within a year. We want to enhance our instruction with modern technological tools. We have this year with the help of Jenn Judkins used many apps and learned to use many tools and learned to use them effectively in a learning environment. When we think about reading difficulty; every student in the district now has to read and write for Google, which is an amazing tool. We are looking at assistive technology for students with dyslexia. Ms. Ryan commented that we have an amazing group of educators in Woburn. Ms. Young and Ms. Ryan have worked hard to line up for them the highest quality professional development in the area. They have really worked hard together a comprehensive and robust set of tools for our educators because with the tools we believe the students will get high quality instruction. The goal is to ensure success. We want every student to be able to access high quality education where they are achieving a high quality of literacy.

Dr. Wells asked about the national average of students that have dyslexia.

Ms. Ryan said about 24% of students with disabilities are coming in, but the tricky part is the specific learning disability captures multiple disabilities. It is not easy to tease out dyslexia. This is something Ms. Ryan is working on getting better data, she does know we don't see it identified in the early grades. There are enough indicators that we should be able to tease out and identify a lot sooner than we have in the past.

Dr. Wells followed up by asking what we are seeing in our district as a percentage.

Ms. Ryan replied typically in the early grades you see students categorized in the category of developmental disability, which is a broad scope. We are working towards being able to tease that out to a more specific identification such as dyslexia early on.

Dr. Wells asked about the prognosis of early intervention with dyslexia.

Ms. Ryan stated that students who have intervention early on do well. She is using two programs where evidence really provides good strong indications of success.

Dr. Wells asked Ms. Ryan if she is reaching out to parents to help with the identification with their children.

Ms. Ryan responded yes she is, she has talked about working with families and also having outreach in some form for support. There are some tools we have for example the health history form.

Dr. Wells suggested reaching out to local pediatric groups and having some discussion with their staff to help with identification.

Dr. Wells asked if the Tier instruction is common and has been adapted nationwide.

Ms. Young said yes. Tier 1 is what happens in the classroom, Tier 2 is anytime a teacher recognizes something in the classroom and Tier 3 is reaching into that bucket of tools.

Dr. Wells asked about literacy, how are our students doing in general.

Ms. Young said that within our big markers, ELA MCAS scores, we are doing pretty well. What we are looking at now, beyond overall achievement, is the students who we aren't necessarily meeting the needs of and identifying them early.

Ms. Cormier asked about the ESI-3 for Pre-K & K, has this started yet.

Ms. Ryan said the ESI tool is one that has been used in the district previously. They have invested in the current version of this tool. Students that were screened previously, this was the tool that was used. We are adding to the process by using this tool for preschool students, and we are also adding in the history form as another data point.

Ms. Cormier asked about kids who are new to the district and are a little older.

Mr. Ryan said they will all be screened.

Ms. Cormier asked if students in second and third grade who are on the cusp will be re-evaluated.

Ms. Ryan replied they made the decision for any student that is coming in they will be looking at the history form. We will need to see at the different grade levels what is appropriate for students coming in.

Ms. Cormier asked if a parent has concerns and maybe didn't screen in previously would they have the opportunity to take a better look.

Ms. Ryan said there are other assessments that they will use throughout the school year.

Ms. Young commented that K-5 students are receiving benchmark assessments 3x a year.

Mr. Kisiel thinks this is a great Pre-K tool for assessment. He himself has some form of this, and it showed up in his reading of letters to pronouncing his words. Reading was no problem, but his letters looked upside down.

Mr. Mulrenan asked if this will involve the EL students.

Ms. Young has met with EL Coordinator Ms. Erin Cooper, and they have discussed some of the best interventions for our EL students as well as looking at the tiers.

Mr. Mulrenan echoed what Dr. Wells said, it might be a good idea to team up with some of our local groups to develop partnerships which are growing stronger. He applauds them for their efforts.

Mrs. Chisholm asked what the percentage of students with dyslexia in Woburn is.

Ms. Ryan replied we don't have a specific number because of the way the data is recorded, this needs to be teased out.

Dr. Wells said they are going to have to do a lot of outreach and let them know this is to help the child and not judge. Explain to families why they are collecting the family history information.

Ms. Young commented that a lot of this is normalizing the conversation.

Chairperson Crowley feels this is exciting. Even during this difficult time in education, Ms. Young and Ms. Ryan took the lead with this and integrating early intervention will really help. It is awesome this was done in a collaborative way; Special Education and General Education.

Ms. Ryan commented we have a lot of ELs in Woburn. One of the components of working with ELs and Special Education is teasing out is it a disability-related need or is it because of the differences with the language. As we worked through this process, we have spent a lot of time talking about the different Tiers. It is important that the EL instruction be appropriate for an EL in Tier 1 and Tier 2, so they are not falling into a Tier 3 when they don't need to be. It is having instruction at Tier 1 and Tier 2 that is accessible for every student. These are all of our students.

Whether they are EL, Special Education, or General Education, we are trying to make this model cohesive and aligned.

Dr. Crowley said a lot of effort has been put into this, there are people behind the scenes. Professional Development makes all of our students better.

Recommendation for Appointment — Pursuant to MGL c. 71 Section 59

Candidate Courtney Young for Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Chairperson Crowley stated that the school committee is responsible for the appointment of certain positions in the district, one being Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Crowley through a very rigorous process has come to a recommendation for the school committee to consider, and that candidate is Ms. Courtney Young.

Dr. Crowley began by saying this is our third silver lining this evening for the Woburn Public Schools.

Dr. Crowley walked through the timeline and the selection process.

The job was posted on January 14, 2021 and remained posted until January 29, 2021. Over 30 applications were received. The first round of resume screening occurred on February 5, 2021 by our three Assistant Superintendents and HR Director Judi O'Neil. A rubric was used in that process to bring the number of potential candidates from 33 to 12. On February 9, 2021 a representative team of 8 people was brought in to use that same screening rubric to bring the 12 candidates to potentially 5. The top three candidates were invited to interview on February 24, 2021. There was an interview development team composed of staff and administrators that was used in the process. There was a 12 person interview committee who spent the day on February 24, 2021 and at the end of the interviews, Ms. Courtney Young was selected.

Dr. Crowley said it is an honor to present to the school committee Ms. Courtney Young as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Crowley has had the privilege of working with Ms. Young every day for the past few years. Woburn Public Schools is where we are today in large part because of Ms. Young's work, both in the virtual academy this year, with the elementary principals, with the special education department, and with the technology department. Her enthusiasm for knowledge; there is no book she has not read. She went to Providence College and Simmons College. She was accepted into multiple doctoral programs and will be enrolling at Northeastern University this summer. She has a thirst for knowledge and began her career as a Special Education educator in the Woburn Public Schools and then became a classroom teacher. As Superintendent, the opportunity to recommend Ms. Courtney Young for the position is a great honor.

Chairperson Crowley asked the committee members if they have any questions for Ms. Young.

Dr. Wells asked Ms. Young if she would explain UBD.

Ms. Young said that UBD is the way we design curriculum. When we took on the ATLAS program; where we house our curriculum, we also took on Understand By Design as the way we map our curriculum. This has three different phases; Standards, Assessments and Learning.

Dr. Wells asked if the goal is to have Ms. Young transition to the position of Assistant Superintendent.

Dr. Crowley said the plan is to present her tonight. The nice part is we are a team and everyone works together. Ms. Young and Ms. Sprague have been working together closely. Once the dust settles, there will be some delineation. Virtual Academy will remain intact this year and Ms. Young will remain the VA Principal.

Dr. Wells said that traditionally in Woburn, Dr. Crowley has chosen outside candidates for previous positions, and this speaks very highly of Ms. Young.

Mr. Mulrenan asked Ms. Young about student achievement due to COVID-19.

Ms. Young said just as she and Ms. Ryan presented tonight, they are focusing on Tiers. We need to make sure we have those assessments in place.

Mr. Mulrenan is looking forward to Ms. Young's efforts.

Mrs. Chisholm commented that Ms. Young has big shoes to fill and a tough road to follow and is sure she is up to the challenge. Ms. Sprague has done a lot for our students and for our city and wished her well in her retirement.

Ms. Lipsett has had the pleasure of seeing what Ms. Young brought to the district. Although she has big shoes to fill, he can't think of a better choice.

Chairperson Crowley thanked Mr. Lipsett for his help with the screening of candidates for this position.

Dr. Wells made a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation of Ms. Young for the position of Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Chairperson Crowley stated that Dr. Crowley has the authority to enter into contract negotiations with Ms. Young.

Ms. Young thanked the committee and stated she feels fortunate to have been able to be with Ms. Sprague for as long as she has.

Chairperson Crowley told Ms. Young the committee is here to support her and that she is a great addition to the team.

COVID-19 Update

Considerations in returning to full-time in-person learning.

Dr. Crowley began by saying we are back in a similar state as we were in the summer to some extent. We continue to monitor DASHBOARD. Dr. Crowley is not receiving emails of positive cases as frequently; this doesn't mean it is gone, but it is not quite as prevalent. One of the reasons Dr. Crowley believes we have not seen the spread in schools is we are continuing our mitigation strategies. Dr. Crowley was fortunate to read to a first grade class today and the kids are all masked. Everyone is following the rules and this is a tribute to our educators, to our parents, and to the kids. The strategies we put into place back in September are working. We will continue with our staff testing through the end of March. Dr. Crowley thanked City Hall for allowing this to happen. We are testing over 200 staff on a voluntary basis every Friday. We do have the Abbott-Binax testing ready to go at schools for those that have signed up. It is nice to report that the city rate is at 2.5%, which is the lowest it has been since August or September. The rate in Woburn continues to decline.

Specifically to the Woburn Public Schools in Massachusetts:

Last week the Governor and Commissioner Riley articulated they wanted all schools to return to in person. What they left out was a lot of the detail for that plan. Dr. Crowley was on a call last week with the Commissioner, and he indicated that his goal was to have a full in-person school for elementary beginning on April 5, 2021. He then followed up by saying he was going to convene an emergency Board of Education meeting because he needs the authority to make this a reality. That meeting is scheduled for this Friday. Presumably, they may allow him to move forward with the in-person plan. Dr. Crowley was on a call today with the Mass. Association of School Superintendents, and they all feel this has been incredibly frustrating, the goal posts keep moving. No one wants to go back to school more than educators, but we need some kind of plan to get back there. At the forefront is a

vaccine for our teachers. Without a vaccine, which is close, it is difficult to imagine teachers coming back into the building feeling safe. With Johnson & Johnson coming out and with Pfizer and Moderna available, Dr. Crowley thinks we need to advocate with our local legislators to prioritize educators. Dr. Crowley has signed a joint agreement with WTA President Barbara Locke in that regard. Over the weekend the Middlesex League Superintendents drafted a letter that was released this afternoon to Commissioner Riley. Dr. Crowley will release this letter to staff tomorrow morning and to our families later. Essentially what they are saying is that we need a plan. There is so much information that is unknown. The CDC says it is a 6-foot distance and Massachusetts is saying it is a 3-foot distance. No one has given any guidance about lunch. There are a lot of questions we still need to answer. Transportation guidance that allows us to get students onto the bus as long as they are wearing masks and the windows are down was released a couple of weeks ago. We are left with a lot of questions and some challenges. We built an incredibly elaborate system here in Woburn; Dr. Crowley is very proud of what we built in the hybrid model and in the virtual model. To make that happen we have had to hire multiple staff and then also move staff from their regular classroom to become virtual teachers or hire a teacher to become a virtual teacher. To just undo this is not easy. All of our elementary specials teach remotely right now. If we come back they are going to have to go back into the schools; which is fine we can do that, but we then have to figure out the schedules. We need to make sure they are not going to 3 or 4 schools in one given day. All of our Special Education and other student services have been modified to meet the pandemic in the hybrid model. When they target April 5th as a potential date we are saying we need to make sure this is done thoughtfully and done safely. We are still right now in the middle of a pandemic. As a school system we are doing an amazing job, but we have to make sure we are very careful to make sure we are following the IEPs that are legally prescribed whenever we flip back into the regular order of business.

Our Next Steps:

Tomorrow morning we are going to meet with our Principal group.

We are going to develop a survey that needs to go out to our staff because our staff are on the front lines, and we need to hear their voices in this process.

We had subgroups set up in the beginning of August. We are going to reconvene these groups.

Dr. Baldassarre: Equity Subgroup

Ms. Sprague: Curriculum and Instruction Subgroup

Mr. Alconada: Finance & Operations (PPE) Subgroup

We have been working throughout and will continue. This afternoon we had a great meeting with the WTA Leadership Team.

Ultimately they will be making a recommendation to the school committee about a potential plan to return.

What we have said internally is that we will plan April 5th because that is what the date set is. However, that date may change. Dr. Crowley believes it probably will change, but we can't necessarily as a district kick the can down the road. We have to have a plan, and we will have a plan. Our planning has already started. Last week Dr. Crowley pushed out a survey to all families. Dr. Crowley walked through the results with the committee.

We received over 2500 responses.

Of the hybrid families; 2300 students would come back in person and 55 of our hybrid students would push to virtual academy. We are going to maintain the virtual academy for the rest of this year.

Of our virtual academy families; 92 students would come back in person and 338 would remain in the virtual academy.

The point of this survey was to see the initial response. As we think about untangling all of these webs, we may have virtual academy classrooms that go from 12 students to 2. There are a lot of logistical things that we want to tease out. This survey was done for our benchmarking to see how to at least begin to plan. Our flowchart is actually the same as it was from August. We receive DESE guidance when they provide it. The steering committee has met and continues to meet. This time we are going to start a lot of the work at the building based team and will be surveying staff. Staff at the building know a lot about entrance and exiting buildings and what lunch might look like. That survey will influence this subcommittee work and ultimately will react in accordance with the DESE guidance. Dr. Crowley wants to make sure we are doing this safely and rushing to the finish line doesn't feel totally right, but we will begin that process because that is what we need to do. He has a great team who will continue to work 24 hours a day. We are trying to respond the best we can, but the target shifts. We will meet the challenge and this is a work in progress. We need to see what will happen on the Friday's DESE call and Dr. Crowley is sure the commissioner will have a call soon thereafter and we will continue to work together.

Dr. Wells thought the state was advocating for an elementary return only and Dr. Crowley is planning for everyone to return.

Dr. Crowley noted the state is advocating for a phased in approach, they want to prioritize the youngest kids first. Dr. Crowley has talked with his WTA Leadership group, and they would probably say it is everybody that would come back because Woburn could do it that way.

Chairperson Crowley commented that the guidance from DESE splits the workforce. You would have elementary school teachers doing one thing. She does not think that DESE took into consideration labor rights, and Woburn does and Woburn will.

Mr. Kisiel is not surprised at the percentages from the survey. He asked if this is a requirement from the state or a suggestion from the state.

Dr. Crowley said the requirement does not exist yet, but thinks it soon will.

Mr. Kisiel asked if it does, will we be able to decide what we want or will grant money be cut?

Dr. Crowley said on the call today, there is no requirement, but the hypothesis is that our Chapter 70 money could be affected if we don't go back into the model the state is telling us that we need. For example; for every day that we are not in the model there will be 1 1/80th of our Chapter 70 money, which is 22 million dollars which is about \$122,000 per day. Dr. Crowley commented just to be clear, on the money that is a hypothetical, it was said in a meeting today that this did not come from the state.

Dr. Baldassarre said you have to understand that if you do not meet your 180 days that there would be expectations that the kids go to school on Saturdays or over vacation to meet the 180-day requirement.

Chairperson Crowley commented that we are looking at DESE having some teeth along with the guidance. The school committee has to respond and we will. We will do whatever we can to support the administration to adhere to the regulations should they pass.

Dr. Wells feels we are in a good position with the community as demonstrated by the parents wanting kids to go back. He thinks it is just working out the details, so hopefully we won't let perfection stand in the way of practicality and what we can and cannot do. Hopefully they will give us some time to get this plan implemented. From a school committee perspective, Dr. Wells feels we should advocate for a return to school with the safeguards in place with the goal of getting children back into school as soon as possible. Dr. Crowley agrees.

Mr. Mulrenan referred to Dr. Crowley's emphasis on the vaccine for staff. Why aren't the teachers a top priority? Woburn will do it right the first time. Woburn will do it right the second time.

Dr. Crowley stated they had no advance notice, this caught them all by surprise.

Mr. Lipsett asked about waivers.

Dr. Crowley said the question was about waivers from DESE and if Woburn will be applying?

Dr. Crowley is not sure of the waiver criteria yet. If we need to apply for a waiver we will.

Mrs. Chisholm asked if we could extend the hybrid days to full days and try to work out the kinks with lunch and bussing. Slowly transfer everybody back into school instead of taking a big jump.

Dr. Crowley said we are going to have a conversation with elementary principals tomorrow morning about this. There are a couple of things; we still need to feed them lunch and the other part is the half day is used for teachers to plan for the students who are on the remote side of hybrid.

Mrs. Chisholm suggests slowly bringing everybody back. They need to get back and the teachers need to see their kiddos. She hopes those that are the most vulnerable age-wise get the vaccine.

Dr. Wells suggested you might want to consider having extra meetings.

Dr. Crowley said once we have more guidance we can plan for more meetings.

Dr. Wells said we still need dialogue with the community just like we did during the summer.

Chairperson Crowley said Dr. Crowley will let her know if we could have an interim meeting. Right now we have the infrastructure of a plan. We have excellent leadership here, and we will get through this. We will be transparent. We do support the teachers getting vaccinated as soon as possible. Dr. Crowley has the full support of the school committee. We also support a full return to school as soon as possible but with mitigating strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Budget Development Process

Mr. Alconada gave an update on the timeline.

He will be having final budget meetings with principals and department heads on Thursday. They have had 12 meetings to date and will have 4 more. Next week they will finalize the draft budget and create some budget summaries. The plan is to submit the draft budget to the school committee on March 24, 2021. Over the ensuing

month the Finance subcommittee will have the opportunity to analyze and assess that budget, dig into it and help create some special priorities for us. At the April 27th school committee meeting, hopefully the budget will be approved by the committee. That will give us enough time to transmit to the Mayor by April 30th.

Mr. Alconada pointed out a couple of things in terms of budget considerations. One is through the state budget process; Chapter 70 can always be affected, so we have to keep an eye on that. Also, in the American Rescue plan, there are billions of dollars for local cities and school districts. Mr. Alconada does not know yet what that translates to for Woburn, but that money would be significant to our budget process. This will be something we will be working with through city hall. COVID-19 has made a lot of things fluid and uncertain and that extends to the budget as well.

Dr. Wells commented having served on the committee when they received the economic relief in 2007-2008 and asked that we try not spending any money coming in on non-recurring items. It is better to spend it on supplies.

Mr. Alconada said there is a lot of opportunity to spend that money on curriculum and instructional.

Dr. Wells said the goal of the subcommittee level is to look at changes in the budget and focus on additions and subtractions. What is being asked and what is being cut and what are the justifications for doing that. This is done so that when it goes to the Mayor we will have good support for that.

Chairperson Crowley commented the process is going to be very streamlined, and she is looking forward to the presentation.

Approval of Administrative Position to Support Central Office Operations

Mr. Alconada began by saying this position in the Special Education department. Having this position will allow them to be more effective in the early childhood program. This program is quite active. This job description will allow this person to be pulled into the central office if needed, for example a special project. This is something the Special Education department can afford. This has been to the personnel subcommittee.

Dr. Wells asked the Superintendent to explain this position.

Dr. Crowley said we have hundreds of students in our preschool programs. If they were in their own building they would have this Administrative position for enrolling and placing of students. Dr. Crowley feels it is important to get this person onboard before registration starts. We need someone in place to answer questions for the parents.

Dr. Wells is willing to support this position, but to hold this for now as we may need cash for planning to get back into school. We need to make sure there are sufficient funds for that first.

Dr. Crowley said there is money available now for back to school planning; 1.9 million dollars are available to support students back to school. This is not COVID-19 money. Ms. Young and Ms. Ryan said early childhood has been greatly affected. This is a great need.

Mr. Mulrenan said this position was discussed in his subcommittee. We do have the job description.

Mrs. Chisholm has some concerns the Mayor might be asking why is this position so important.

The Personnel subcommittee voted 3-0 to approve this position and bring it forward to the committee tonight.

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to approve the Administrative Position to Support Central Office Operations.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Subcommittee

Chairperson Crowley said they met on 3/1/21.

Finance Minutes (Ellen Crowley, acting chair for Subcommittee; Ms. Chisholm appeared remotely)

Questions on expenditures from the SC to Administration were addressed and answered.

Dr. Wells made a motion to approve the list of bills.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Dr. Wells made a motion to approve the balance of accounts.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Curriculum and Data Trends

Mr. Lipsett tabled his minutes until the next meeting.

The High School Administration is asking for consideration to make AP Exams voluntary; right now they are mandated.

Chairperson Crowley referred this topic to Mr. Lipsett and his subcommittee and asked if they could have a recommendation for the next school committee meeting.

Personnel Subcommittee

Mr. Mulrenan said they met on 2/12/21. He turned to Mr. Alconada for the first update.

Mr. Alconada said they have talked about putting forward a proposal that may have an early separation incentive, for not only teachers, but other staff members. It is in the discussion phase and we talked to an outside agency to put together an analysis for us. We have just received the analysis and we are still processing that at this point.

Dr. Wells asked Chairperson Crowley if we could send this to the Finance subcommittee; he feels this is more a financial impact than personnel.

Chairperson Crowley said yes and thanked the Finance subcommittee for taking this on.

Mr. Mulrenan let the committee know that Ms. Ryan addressed a parent email concerning transportation the committee received.

Policy and Safety Subcommittee

Mr. Kisiel said they met on 2.26.21 via ZOOM.

They discussed the following:

Disposal of Surplus Materials Policy

ADF: Wellness Policy

KBB: Equitable Translation Policy

JEB: Entrance Age

Chairperson Crowley asked Dr. Baldassarre if he could speak of the Entrance Age policy first and see if the committee would consider taking it off the table tonight on an emergency basis.

Dr. Baldassarre said in the policy manual, he did consult and the committee does have the authority to dispose of their normal policy when something like this comes up. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused considerable disruption in education. A number of families who may have had their children in kindergarten this year, may not have sent their children to kindergarten as it is not compulsory. Other families, because we were in the hybrid model, selected to send their children to kindergarten in a private school or have a second or even a third year of preschool. A number of parents have come forward very recently to say they would prefer that their six year old children enter kindergarten as opposed to first grade. The current school committee policy that we have in our policy manual states very clearly that children will enter kindergarten if they are 5 years old before September 1st and it states that children under 7 years of age who have not previously attended school shall be regularly admitted to first grade. The way that this policy is interpreted by Dr. Baldassarre is that 5 year olds go to kindergarten and 6 year olds go to first grade. There is some confusing language; where it says who has not previously attended school and at the end it says only during the first two weeks of the fall term. This has been confusing to Dr. Baldassarre, to our principals who are admitting students and there has been some confusion about children entering kindergarten at age 5 or age 6. If we gave parents the choice on that we would have great disparity in our kindergarten classes; kids

who have just turned 5 and kids who may be approaching 7 years old in the same educational grouping. If we were to say to families at the age of 6 you can enter kindergarten as opposed to age 5, we may be coming before the school committee in the coming months to say we need more kindergarten teachers or more first grade teachers. This could really cause a disruption in the flow of our student body coming into the school system. Clearly the language of the current policy needs to be addressed. Specifically, what is stated in #3 is not clear to Dr. Baldassarre. It would be more advantageous to administrators in the system and more advantageous for our families to have a policy that more clearly delineates the entrance age for children into the Woburn Public Schools. Dr. Baldassarre and Ms. Sprague explored other policies from districts around the state and found a couple that they liked and crafted language that reflected what previously exists in the Woburn Public Schools; that we will admit children when they are 5 years old into kindergarten, and 6 years old into first grade and they will regularly progress in their grades as they move on. That language was presented to the Policy and Safety subcommittee and upon their affirmation of that language to go forward to the full committee; Dr. Baldassarre had the language vetted by Attorney Michael Joyce. This policy was revised by counsel and sent back to us. Dr. Baldassarre and Ms. Sprague reviewed this and they do agree with the language that is in this policy that really gives us and our families a clear understanding that if you are 5 years old before September 1st you are going into kindergarten and if you are 6 years old before September 1st you are going into first grade. There are situations in which families will say but my child is not kindergarten ready based on a number of factors; it could be socialization, it could be academics, it could be many different things. What we are able to do as a result of our retention policy that currently exists is a student could potentially start in first grade. After they are in first grade and have had the opportunity to be observed and assessed by their teachers and other professionals, the principal in collaboration with the parent could essentially move the child back to kindergarten. The principals have latitude to make individual decisions pursuant to the retention policy but the entrance age of all students into the Woburn Public Schools should be uniform and should be clear for the parents and administrators. This is why we are advocating for an expedited approval of the draft entrance age policy the committee has before them tonight.

Dr. Wells thinks instead of saying Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, because over time things change and names change, it should say Superintendent or his/her designee. This would make it cleaner.

Dr. Wells had some concern about the last paragraph. Way back when the committee was trying to do the entrance age policy, the tricky part was always the exception. He thinks the school committee in consultation with the administration back then was trying to avoid people coming in earlier to the school system. He was wondering if the exception piece could say something to that effect. He feels the way it reads here essentially any of the age restrictions could be disregarded based on a decision by the principal or the Superintendent or designee. He thinks that's where the administration and the school committee back then was having issues. If there is a lot of pressure from the parent you could finally say ok. Dr. Wells understands the student could go to a lower grade but not a higher grade.

Dr. Baldassarre said the retention policy is actually called the Retention and Promotion of students. We did have a student this year move up a grade by that policy.

Dr. Wells said this is for the start of school and feels that is where that paragraph is tricky.

Dr. Baldassarre feels it is the paragraph before that which says the only exception to this policy. The last paragraph should read the decision on whether to grant this exception rather than an exception.

Dr. Wells said it should say the above exception.

Chairperson Crowley asked the committee how they feel about acting on this tonight.

Dr. Wells responded by saying we can always modify policies so he is fine with acting on this tonight.

Dr. Wells made a motion to suspend the rules so the committee can adopt the new policy JEB-ENTRANCE AGE.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Dr. Wells stated the committee now has to approve the policy as the previous motion was to suspend the rules.

Ms. Cormier made a motion to adopt the new policy JEB-ENTRANCE AGE with the amendments agreed to. Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Chairperson Crowley announced this will be our official policy and thanked Dr. Baldassarre and Ms. Sprague for all of their work.

Dr. Baldassarre noted at a previous school committee meeting Ms. Cormier had asked the Policy subcommittee to explore our Wellness policy. Dr. Baldassarre discovered this policy with the adoption date of 2006 is not really written clearly as a policy. There's language in there that states; these are examples of things your school district can do. The language of the policy isn't clear on what would be expected of any school district, administrator, or personnel. Dr. Baldassarre did further exploration to find that the school district's Wellness Advisory Committee is actually governed by state regulation 105CMR 215. Dr. Baldassarre corresponded with Attorney Michael Joyce on this topic. As is the case in Special Education and many other facets of the district oversight, we do not need a policy where clear state regulations exist. Dr. Baldassarre is recommending the committee vote to remove policy ADF from the policy manual completely and allow Dr. Baldassarre to work with the SSA subcommittee on the establishment of a school Wellness and Advisory committee since one does not currently exist.

Dr. Wells commented we have lots of policies that are law, we have non-discrimination policies and things like that. He does not think that necessarily precludes having a policy and has concerns about removing the MASC policy. The policy is separate from having a wellness committee. He thinks this should be looked at a little more before they remove the policy.

Chairperson Crowley said since we have an objection to the recommended removal of the policy we will send the wellness policy revisions to the SSA subcommittee.

Dr. Wells said it might be something as simple as giving MASC a call to see if there is something we are missing by taking this policy out.

Chairperson Crowley said we are going to refer this to the SSA subcommittee and they can write a new policy for wellness because it sounds like there is content in it that Dr. Baldassarre wants to use.

Dr. Baldassarre stated that the Wellness Advisory Committee as stated in the regulation would be more suited for SSA. He suggested a two pronged approach; the implementation of 105CMR 215 at SSA and the re-evaluation of file ADF go to Policy.

Mr. Kisiel said he is on both subcommittees as is Ms. Cormier.

Chairperson Crowley stated that we will not remove the policy until we talk to MASC.

Ms. Cormier commented we have the CMR about the committees but we also need to have a policy. The committee is mentioned in the policy, but because we are part of the Federal Child Nutrition programs we are required to have a policy.

Dr. Baldassarre said because the Wellness Committee does not exist, it is not a policy to be followed which is why the recommendation for removal. Until then we can leave this in.

Chairperson Crowley said we decided to leave this one in until we have a new one, which is going to policy. The wellness analysis of the regulations is going to SSA.

Dr. Baldassarre went on to discuss the Disposal of Surplus Materials Policy. The subcommittee did make a vote recently to dispose of surplus materials. Dr. Baldassarre corresponded with the city auditor and with Attorney Michael Joyce. It is good to practice to have a standard way of going about disposing of surplus materials. This is a proposal for the policy to go onto the table for the committee's review.

Mr. Kisiel said the Policy subcommittee made a vote of 3-0 to bring it to the full committee.

Dr. Wells made a motion to place the Disposal of Surplus Materials Policy on the table for 30 days.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Mr. Kisiel stated that KBB: Equitable Translation Policy is not ready to be discussed yet.

Resource Utilization Subcommittee

Dr. Wells said they have not met.

Student Services and Achievement Subcommittee

Ms. Cormier said they will be meeting on Thursday.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairperson Crowley said she received 4 correspondences.

Dr. Wells made a motion to accept them in the permanent record

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Chairperson Appreciates those constituents reaching out to her;.

Jennifer Baker Jones had some questions before filling out the survey about staff placement and the V A.

Melissa Greer was generally commenting to the school committee to slow down and remember that changing the education system could create instability for students.

Valerie O'Brien wrote a very detailed email advising the school committee on the CDC guidance.

Elizabeth Beyea was one of the parents caught in the age 6 issue in regards to enrolling her child in first grade at the age of six.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mulrenan made a motion to adjourn.

Motion was seconded, all in favor. Motion passed 7-0.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Chisholm-yes, Ms. Cormier-yes, Mr. Kisiel-yes, Mr. Lipsett-yes, Mr. Mulrenan-yes, Dr. Wells-yes, Chairperson Crowley-yes

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean MacLeod

Jean MacLeod

Recording Secretary

